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# STATE OF WASHINGTON INTERAGENCY MEDIATION PROJECT

Mediation Services currently available in Thurston County.



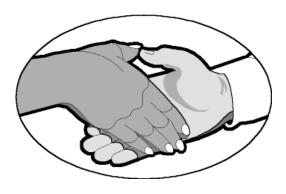
Mediation Request Line (360) 753-3260, Ext. 104 Fax: (360) 664-0498



### STATE OF WASHINGTON INTERAGENCY MEDIATION PROJECT FOR WORKPLACE DISPUTES

COORDINATED THROUGH THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## MEDIATION SERVICES



# MEDIATION -- THE ALTERNATIVE

### WHAT IS MEDIATION?

Mediation is an informal, voluntary way to help people solve disagreements. Mediation has been used very successfully by courts, employees, unions, businesses, and consumer groups to resolve disputes. The State of Washington Interagency Mediation Project (Mediation Project) coordinated through the Employee Advisory Service uses highly trained mediators who work in teams of two. Mediators are trained (by a Dispute Resolution Center) to help people communicate and solve disputes.

The mediators meet with the parties and help them talk to each other about their workplace dispute. Mediators do not take sides in a dispute. They are not advocates for either side. They are not judges. Mediators cannot solve a problem for people. They do help people solve the problem themselves.

# WHAT WORKPLACE DISAGREEMENTS CAN BE MEDIATED?

Almost any kind of workplace disagreement can be mediated. It may be a disagreement between single individuals or between groups of individuals. (This project offers mediation to individuals and small work groups). Types of cases that have been mediated include:

A long time disagreement between co-workers about working styles or arrangements.

A disagreement between a supervisor and an individual or group of employees about work expectations.

# WHAT WORKPLACE DISPUTES MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR MEDIATION?

Some workplace disagreements should not be mediated. Agencies will not make mediation available in cases where there has been violence or the threat of violence, cases involving severe harassment where one party should be disciplined if the complaint is true, and certain other disputes that should be handled as a management or supervisory issue.

Intake personnel (who are trained mediators) will assess through an interview whether your workplace dispute is appropriate for mediation.

### ISN'T MEDIATION AVAILABLE THROUGH OTHER PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD, PERSONNEL RESOURCE BOARD AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION?

Yes, however, mediation through these programs is only available when a formal grievance or complaint is filed and it may take longer to initiate mediation. The Mediation Project is available to address workplace disputes before they escalate.

# IF I CHOOSE MEDIATION, DO I GIVE UP ANY OTHER RIGHTS?

**No.** Mediation does not require that you waive any other rights you have to grieve, arbitrate, or litigate a dispute.

### WHY SHOULD I USE MEDIATION?

- Mediation works! Over 90% of the time, mediation helps the parties solve their disagreement.
- Mediation is responsive. You can get the problem dealt with quickly. A mediation session, under this project, can generally be scheduled within 2 to 3 weeks. Most mediations take a few hours.
- Mediation is a confidential process protected under state law.

Agencies are providing this mediation service to their employees at no cost. Why? Because they believe mediation is a more cost-effective way of resolving workplace disputes. By resolving workplace disputes, agencies improve the work environment for all employees.

# WHEN AND WHERE DO MEDIATIONS HAPPEN?

Mediations are scheduled at a time and location mutually convenient to all parties. This may be during work hours. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request.

### WHO ARE THE MEDIATORS?

The volunteer mediators come from a wide variety of jobs within State agencies. The pool of mediators attempts to reflect the diversity of our community.

Before they can mediate disputes, these employees receive extensive training and practice in mediation in order to become certified. Becoming a certified mediator is a lengthy and demanding process.

Mediators do not mediate disputes within their own agency under the Mediation Project.

### HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

All participating agencies have designated a mediator who can give more information about the Mediation Project. The person for your agency is Carol Kramer at (360) 753-3260.

You can also contact the Mediation Project request line at (360) 753-3260 Ext 104. A Mediation Project member who can answer any questions you may have will return your call.